How Gaming Saved Me From Darkness

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Written by Mr Enoky

My passion for gaming started back in 1995 when I first played on an arcade machine with my brother and a cousin where we played *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs.* That experience was out of this world for me and even though we couldn't finish it, the sensation was breathtaking. But back in those days, playing videogames wasn't considered "cool"; it was something for "nerds", or in my case, for "weird people" or "losers".

Image: Capcom

However, years later I met my girlfriend and we started playing *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* on PC and I just never got a chance to win against her and her sniper rifle. That was until her father bought an Xbox with *Halo: Combat Evolved* and I got my first win in split-screen multiplayer. After that we only played coop campaigns. But then *Halo 2* came out and a lot changed and we started to feel as part of a community, playing almost every single day which helped me to deal with the bullying I received at school for being different.

Whenever my anxiety levels were too high, we would take a bus to the beach where she would always manage to get me to calm down and throw my anxiety away into the ocean where it belongs.

Years passed and she got sick, and we couldn’t play together anymore. Playing a game without her felt weird and empty; so I decided to stop playing games until she got better. But she didn’t, and my grief started raising my anxiety levels to the max. I was falling fast, and I didn’t know how to get out of the darkness. Depression started to set in and as a result, I ended up locking myself in my room.

Afterwards, a few games caught my attention, like *Blur*, *Max Payne* 3, *Resident Evil 5*, and some others. But when *Life is Strange* came out I fell in love with video games all over again. It felt like a fresh start for me, especially because I had started studying pedagogy at university and it made me fall in love with photography as well. And then I played *Alan Wake* and it created an itch for writing.

Image: Dontnod Entertainment

But the hardest part of it all was that I still felt alone. Not so much sad or anxious— somehow I learned to live with that. The dark cloud that surrounded me wasn’t dark anymore, but it stayed gray for some time.

More years passed again and with professional help, I managed to climb out of the darkness, and what I found was a world where so many people talked about games, and somehow… it felt like home. People welcomed me with open arms to talk about games, feelings, and everything. My therapist told me that in some cases, video games help people to cope with depression, anxiety and even grief. They said that it was a good decision to choose games to cope with those things instead of choosing alcohol or something else.

Now during these difficult times for all of us, I learned how to keep my mood up and not fall into darkness again. Being able to enjoy video games again is a relief for me, and now I want to use all my life experience to help people in need. That’s why I wanted to be a teacher exclusively for people like me, people with Asperger or autism. Because life has taught me a lot of things, and gaming has taught me to not give up and instead press continue.

Because not one of us knows what is on the next level or chapter, but we as Xbox Ambassadors can help others reach it.

And that is the story of my life so far; what about you? How can you help others who need help and don’t know how to get it?

Mr Enoky

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**blog submission edited for clarity*

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